

# 2018 SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM



*Erie County Department of Social Services*

*Comprehensive Employment Division*

Mark Poloncarz  
Erie County Executive

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Marie A. Cannon  
Social Services Commissioner

## *What is the Erie County Summer Youth Employment Program?*

*The Summer Youth Employment program plays an important role in introducing youth into the workforce, helping them acquire skills that can be used to improve performance in school and become responsible adults. Funds are used to subsidize the wages paid to eligible youth, to support education and training activities, counseling, and employment related services such as transportation to and from work or training. Participants work in entry level jobs at places such as parks, nursing homes, summer camps, child care organizations, senior citizen centers and community recreation centers, among others.*

*Erie County Department of Social Services offers the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) in collaboration with community partners to provide youth with a meaningful work experience over the summer.*

*Erie County offered SYEP services through a partnership with local community agencies, Buffalo Urban League and Catholic Charities who acted as the program operators connecting the youth with a provider worksite, educational opportunities and supportive services.*



To engage people in need and provide a broad range of efficient and effective assistance and services with community partners to facilitate a better future for the people of Erie County.

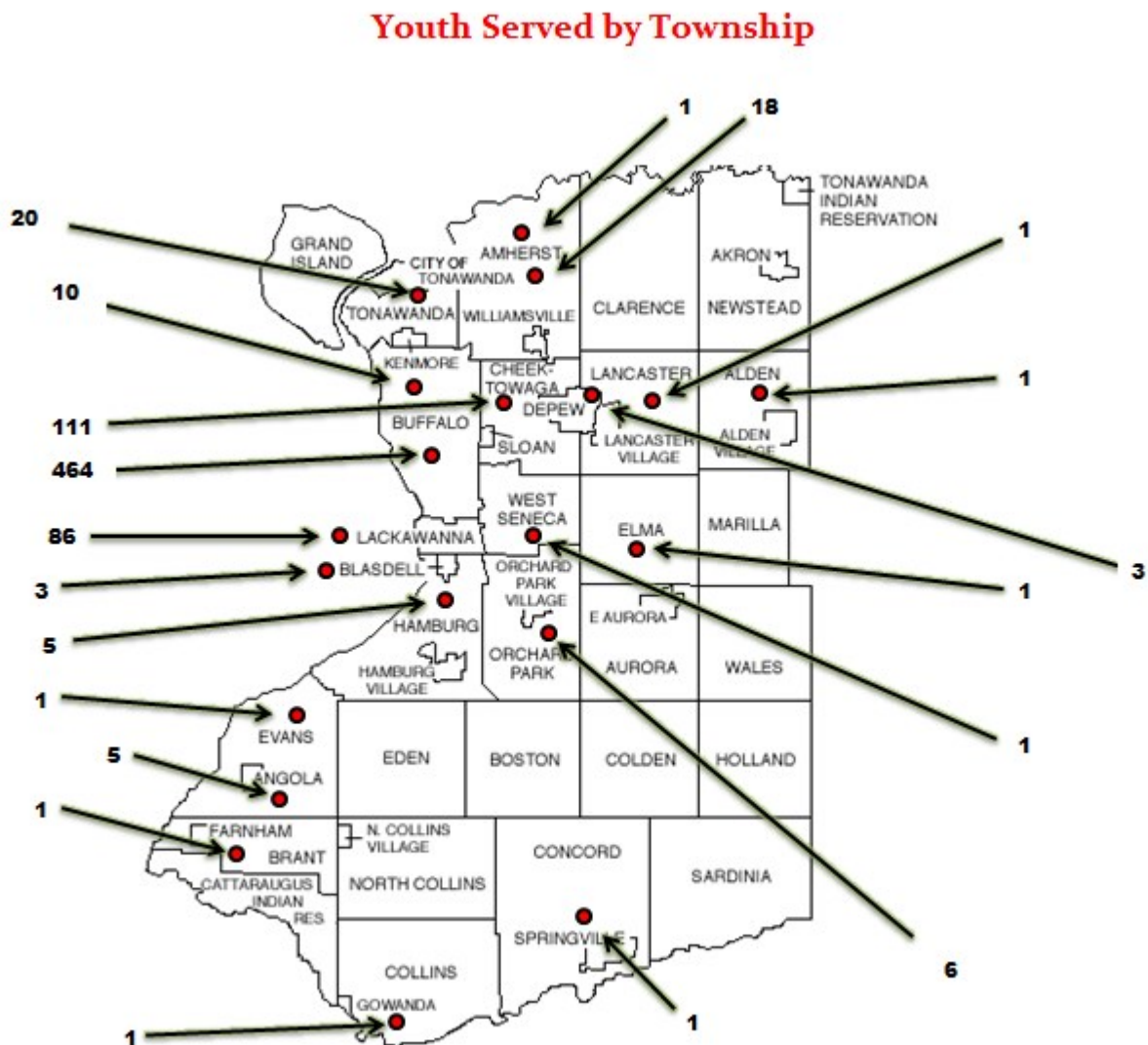


The Buffalo Urban League's Mission is to empower African Americans, other minorities and disadvantaged individuals to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights.



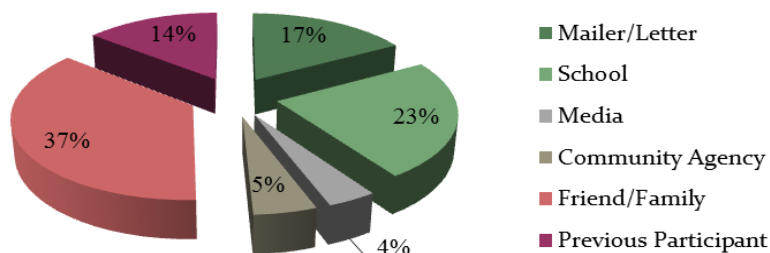
Catholic Charities of Buffalo is a Catholic sponsored human service agency serving anyone in need in the eight counties of Western New York. Believing all persons are created by God, we empower individuals, children and families to achieve and maintain meaningful, healthy and productive lives. We advocate for those in need particularly those who are poor and most vulnerable.

# Youth Served

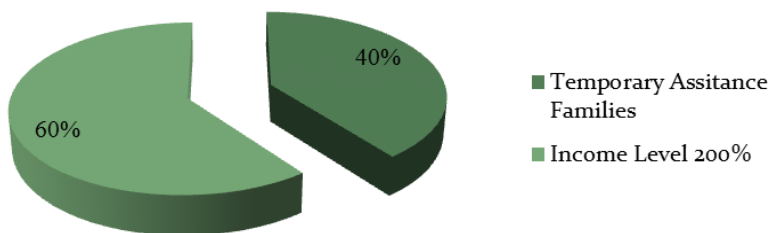


*740 youth participants gained a meaningful  
work experience due to the commitment and support of  
125 worksite providers*

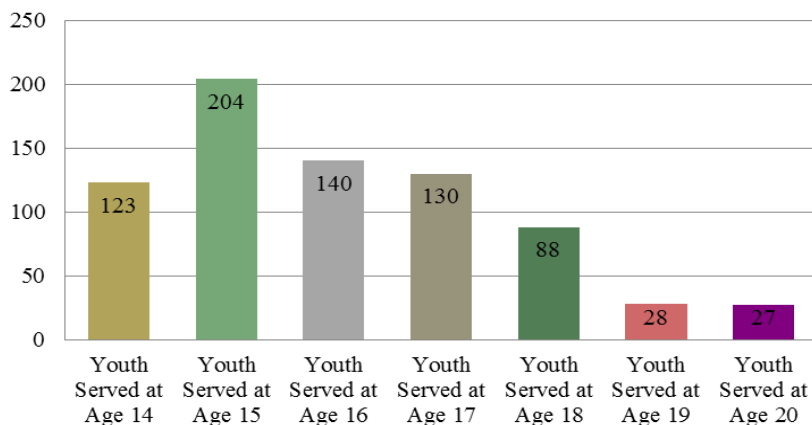
## How did you find out about this year's program?



## Participation Summary



## Youth Served by Age



The State Fiscal Year 2018-2019 New York State Enacted Budget appropriated \$40 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to support the 2018 New York State Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Erie County was allocated \$1.7 million to administer a program.

The SYEP is open to youth between the ages of 14 to 20 whose families are recipients of Temporary Assistance or have family income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

To make youth aware of the program, the district mailed out 4156 applications to Temporary Assistance families with youth in their households between the ages of 14 to 20. Information regarding SYEP was posted on the Erie County website along with print and social media outlets. In addition, program operators, Buffalo Urban League and Catholic Charities posted the information on respective websites.

In 2018, 740 youth from low income households gained valuable work experience through the Erie County Summer Youth Employment Program.

Skills that are critical to long term labor market success and positive economic impacts often begin in the early stages of labor market participation with program such as the SYEP.

Youth participants received the state minimum wage of \$10.40 per hour. The youth worked an average of 130 hours during the eight week program, contributing a total of 95,609 work hours to public, private, and non-profit businesses and organizations and \$1 million to the local economy.



# Worksites



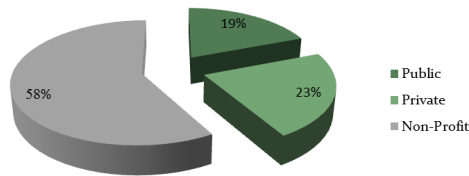
*“Knowing that I help youth in some manner helps me achieve my goal of teaching each and every youth the importance of being on time, showing up, and doing their best.”*

**Sharon Shelton  
Veterans Affairs WNY  
HealthCare System**

## Provider Worksite Types

*Public, Private, Non-profit*

**2018 SYEP Worksite Type**



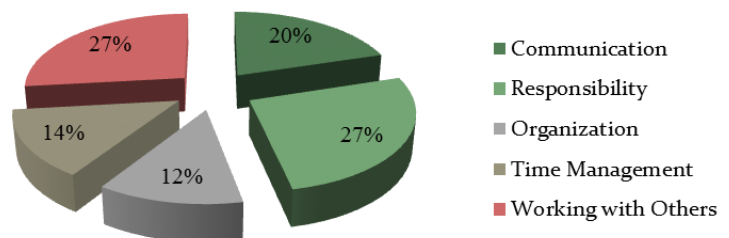
In preparation for the 2018 Summer Youth Employment program, the Department of Social Services mailed out 521 worksite applications to potential businesses and organizations throughout Erie County to host summer youth participants. 125 worksites submitted applications to participate in the program. Worksites included public, private, and non-profit businesses and organizations.

Having a variety of worksites is critical to the programs operation. Employers played a critical role in this program by providing an opportunity for training, career exposure, and the development of workforce readiness skills. Worksite providers offered youth the opportunity to acquire basic work competencies through first-hand work experience. All worksites providers attended an orientation designed to inform them of program procedures and guidelines.

Youth were matched to worksites in various manners which included proximity of site location to the youth's home, occupational interests and availability of worksite slots.

All youth participants received a pre-employment orientation prior to worksite placement. This orientation provided clear expectations and key information to the youth regarding participation in the program. Youth were expected to follow the same work routine and procedures that a regular employee would follow such as attendance, breaks, attire, job expectations, and workplace behavior.

**What skills are you learning during the program?**



Through these partnerships, businesses and organizations provided work assignments and guidance to youth, who were paid through the program operators. Youth learned a variety of skills during the program which included communication, responsibility, organization, time management, and how to work with others.

## **Occupational Sectors**

*Arts and Recreation*

*Camp*

*Community Service*

*Day Care*

*Educational Services*

*Financial Services*

*Government Agency*

*Healthcare / Medical*

*Hospitality / Tourism*

*Informational Technology*

*Legal Services*

*Manufacturing*

*Marketing / Public Relations*

*Media / Entertainment*

*Real Estate*

*Retail*

*Transportation*

# Summer Primetime Workforce Development Program

Summer Primetime programs are aimed at giving youth positive experiences during summer recess, a time when youth do not have the structure that school offers throughout the academic year. Program areas included: academic enrichment; cultural enrichment; career enrichment; youth leadership, community service, and civic engagement; and gang and violence prevention. The Department of Social Services Comprehensive Employment Division and Youth Bureau partnered to identify summer primetime sites who would incorporate a workforce development component into their program for summer youth employment participants. The following primetime sites provided employment and workforce development to 54 youth, resulting in 7 youth obtaining employment beyond the 8 week Summer Youth Employment Program.

**Best Self Behavioral Health** delivered learning opportunities to enhance Students' academic achievement, college and career readiness and social emotional development. They also offered a rigorous workforce readiness curriculum with a strong emphasis on soft skill and positive youth development. This developed employment skills, secure employment, explore career options and develop potential career paths and improve their financial literacy. The summer youth participants were placed in various job shadowing opportunities or completed a career portfolio on site.

**Cornell Cooperative Extension** provided a program called the NYS 4-H Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN). The mission of Youth CAN is to promote civic engagement and workforce readiness among high need teenagers. By creating youth-led networks of community organizations, Youth CAN Teen Leaders became community change agents and conducted projects addressing critical community issues related to health and wellness, education, and resource sustainability. In doing so, Teen Leaders gained the skills needed to graduate from high school, prepare for college, careers and citizenship.

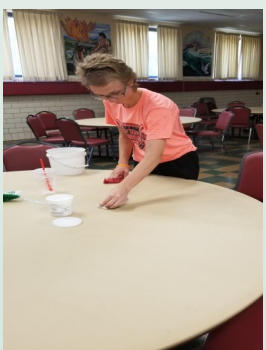
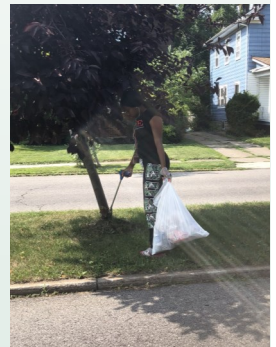
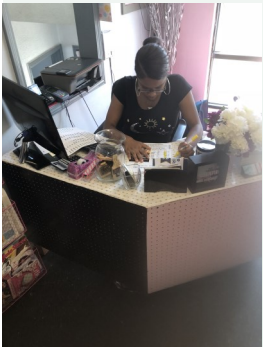
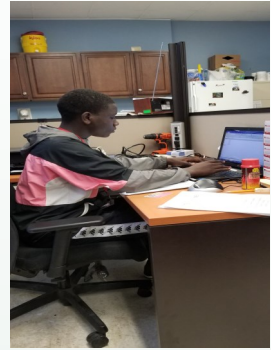
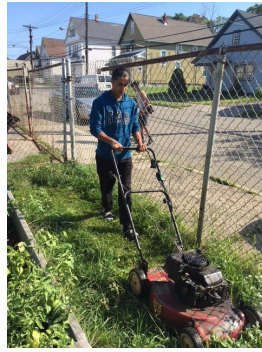
**Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY** provided a site for teens to begin their career exploration and workforce development. The Matt Urban Teen Workforce development program followed the curriculum developed by Youth Works. This program addressed many issues facing urban youth today such as limited career exposure, lack of soft skills and the need for access to mainstream opportunities. The program assisted youth in clarifying their career interests and helped to explore relevant career plans; enhanced communication and customer service skills; prepared for a job search and practiced key interview techniques; developed a resume and cover letters; and gained insight into workplace etiquette and culture. Local businesses teamed up with the Matt Urban Center to provide hands-on work experiences for the youth participants.

**Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP)** trained youth ages 14-20 in sustainable urban agriculture, food systems, micro-enterprise and community leadership through their Growing Green program. Youth grew organic produce at MAPs 1.5 acre urban farm and youth garden sites on Buffalo's West Side. Program activities aimed to reduce the economic and social root causes of delinquency and poverty by increasing economic and educational opportunities for at risk youth on Buffalo's West Side. Youth were employed in meaningful work, gained job and life skills and had the opportunity to give back to their community. Through the program youth became leaders in addressing the food insecurity issues in their own neighborhood and improved healthy food access.

**Westside Community Services** offered a program that included soft skills needed to be successful in real-world work experience at worksites throughout the West Side of Buffalo. The program featured soft skills including workplace etiquette, how to dress for work, phone etiquette, timesheets/time clocks, how to complete new hire paper work, how to read a paycheck/stub, how to set up a bank account, among other topics.



# Youth gaining a meaningful work experience, not just a paycheck





# *Educational Activities*



*“Learning to make  
diverse foods helped me  
appreciate basic cooking  
skills and different  
cultures.”*

**Anika 15  
TT’s Kitchen**

## Educational Activities provided a valuable enhancement to the program

### Educational Opportunities

*ACT UP*

*An Intro To Fashion*

*Catholic Charities NEFE Financial Planning  
Program*

*Catholic Charities Trauma Informed Care  
Empower You*

*Junior Achievement*

*Kaleidoscope Competitions*

*The Power of You*

*Trauma Informed Drum and Dance*

*TT's Kitchen*

*Youth Entrepreneurial Preparation (Y.E.P!)*



To augment the work component of the SYEP, 11 educational activities were offered to better prepare youth as they continue their education and transition to work. Youth had the opportunity to enroll in a variety of educational activities to enhance their summer youth experience and help expand their career goals, and better prepare them to be successful in school, college, and future employment. During the 2018 SYEP, 75% of the youth participants engaged in an educational activities offered by the program operators.

Educational opportunities such as Empower You provided a safe space to bring youth together to express their opinions and voice the concerns facing young adults in today's society. Communication skills were highlighted to enhance their ability to present themselves to adults in a professional manner and to begin honest dialogue centered around realistic career exploration and planning.

*"I never thought I  
would learn such  
an important life  
skill like sewing  
and design."*

**Alyssa 16**



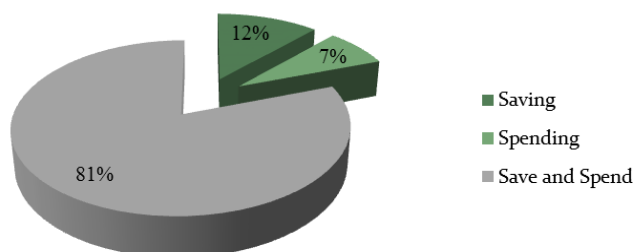
# Financial Literacy

All youth who participated in the SYEP received a financial literacy learning component on personal finance. The program operators partnered with **Bank on Buffalo** and **Key Bank** to provide instruction on financial education to guide and encourage individuals to focus on achieving financial stability. Instruction and materials included: money and income; budgeting and planning; banking and savings. Youth were offered an opportunity to meet with bank representatives to open a bank account and/or sign up for direct deposit. For many youth this was the first time they earned a paycheck.

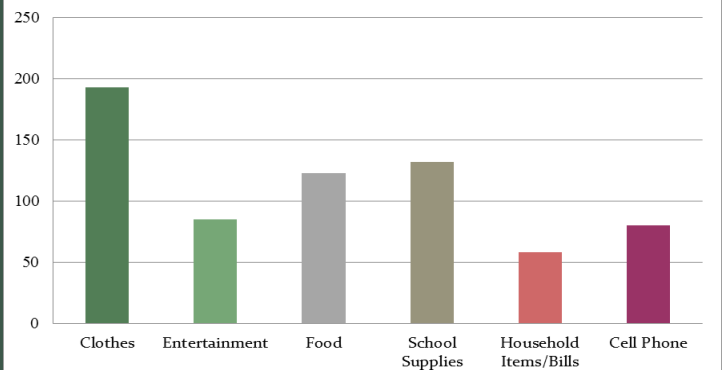
Catholic Charities offered youth a financial educational component, **National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) High School Financial Planning Program**. The program was a series of six topic modules to introduce youth to the fundamentals of money management. Topics included: money management, borrowing, earning power, investing, financial services and insurance. The program is designed to equip youth with fundamental personal finance skills to prepare youth for financial independence.

**Junior Achievement (JA) of Western New York's** volunteer-delivered, kindergarten-12th grade programs foster work-readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy skills, and use experiential learning to inspire youth in our community to dream big and reach their potential. This program helps students to see that education will help them in the future. JA Finance Park was a financial literacy program offered to youth participants to help them build a foundation upon which they can make financial decisions that last a lifetime, including decisions related to income, expenses, savings, and credit. Youth received instruction on recognizing the fundamental role of income in managing their personal finances and factors that affect income and pay. Youth learned to understand that decisions they make about education and career will have an impact on their potential income and quality of life.

What are you doing with your paycheck?



If you are spending some or all of your pay check, what are you spending it on?





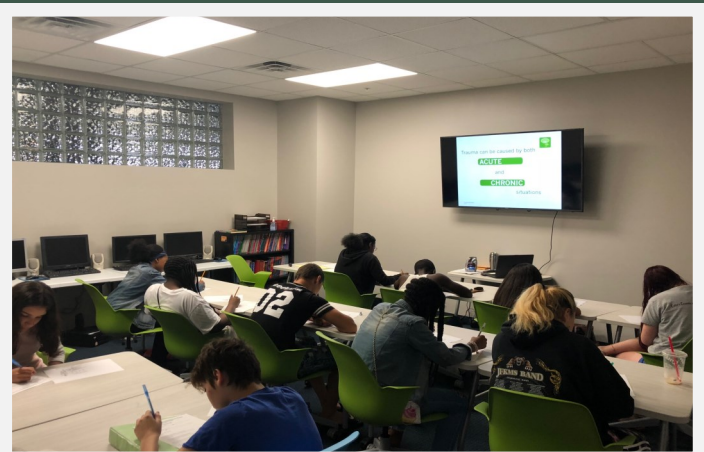
# *Solution Focused - Trauma Informed Care*



As a trauma-informed organization, Erie County Department of Social Services incorporates the five principles of trauma-informed care (Collaboration, Safety, Trustworthiness, Empowerment, and Choice) throughout its services to promote resilience and healing. Erie County Department of Social Services integrated Solution Focused Trauma Informed Care (SF-TIC) principles into the Summer Youth Employment Program and Educational Activities.

SF-TIC provides new tools for approaching challenging situations. SF-TIC is a collaborative stance through viewing the individual as the expert and employing skills of scaling, identifying exceptions, coping questions, relationship inquiry that honors the trauma survivor's experience and instills hope. The SF-TIC approach mitigates trauma re-exposure by developing a care delivery system that is trauma-informed and oriented toward future potential.

Through activities, interactive discussion, and real life scenarios participants were provided instruction on understanding the core concepts of SF-TIC, applying specific techniques, and practice from a SF-TIC perspective. The SF-TIC approach offered youth an opportunity to differentiate between solution building and problem solving. The educational classes stressed the importance of self-care and resiliency. Classes such as ACT UP, Catholic Charities Trauma Informed Care, Empower You, and Trauma Informed Drum and Dance identified strategies for taking care of oneself and developing solutions for difficult situations.



# *Employment Fair*

*“It was refreshing to participate in the employment fair and see first hand the enthusiasm and interest among our county’s youth.”*

**Michelle De Pasquale**  
**Erie County Parks Department**



*"I enjoyed meeting and learning about the different worksites."*

**James 17**

*"I never knew there were so many jobs that I could apply for in this program."*

**Destiny 14**

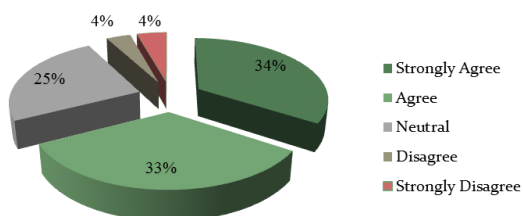


The SYEP Employment Fair was held on June 9th at Erie Community College - City Campus. The employment fair served as an opportunity for youth to meet with potential worksites from a variety of local industries while learning about different career paths. Over 250 youth participants along with 25 worksite providers attended the employment fair and were exposed to a number of workforce development resources as well as ECDSS employment counselors were on site to conduct mock interviews and to provide tips on job-seeking skills.

Informational flyers were distributed to the youth on the following topics: networking, soft skills, employer expectations, and tips on job searching and successfully working an employment fair.

Youth received a job search passport to guide them through the employment fair. This served as a tool to promote conversation as well as exploration with different occupational sectors to aid the worksite matching process.

**Do you feel the worksite placement is a good match?**





# Interviewing Techniques

*“The mock interview helped me feel more comfortable with talking about my past work experiences.”*

**Diamond 18**

*“I have a better idea of what future employers are looking for during an interview.”*

**Jessica 15**

## **Mock Interviews**

The Department of Social Services Comprehensive Employment Division staff was on hand at the employment fair to conduct mock interviews. The mock interviews provided youth with a unique chance to test out their interviewing skills. 128 youth took advantage of participating in a practice interview and received constructive feedback. The mock interviews were a great opportunity for youth to become familiar with interview questions and interview etiquette.



## **Group Presentation**

Additionally, a presentation on job interviewing techniques was conducted for all youth in attendance. This enabled youth to have an idea of the sort of questions they might experience at an actual interview and to expect during an interview. The presentation covered common interview questions and what to expect during an interview. This was followed by a Q & A session.



*Youth attending the employment fair came dressed to impress.*

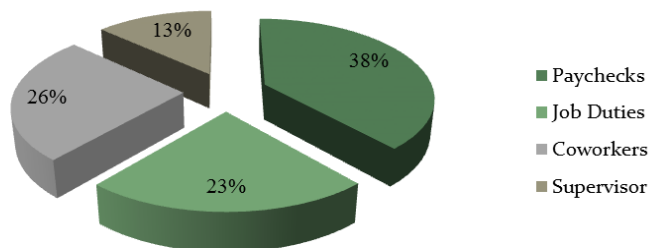
# *Not just a job, but an experience*

The real-world work experience the Summer Youth Employment Program participants gained provided long lasting effects on future career opportunities, higher academic aspirations, vocational guidance, and positive attitudes towards their communities. The SYEP has a variety of benefits for both the individual participants and the communities they serve, including:

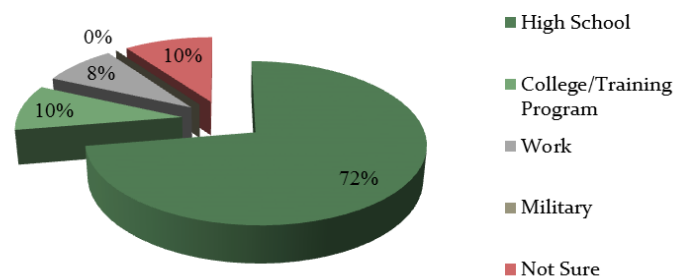
- Positive role models
- Career choice advice and educational guidance
- Increased school attendance
- A greater understanding of financial management
- Improved interpersonal communication skills
- Connections for future career opportunities

The long term goals and objectives for the SYEP participants are focused on decreasing future unemployment in Erie County, breaking systemic cycles of poverty, and ensuring participants have job searching skills as well as tools for successful career exploration. The program seeks to improve the economic, academic, and behavioral outcomes of the populations served.

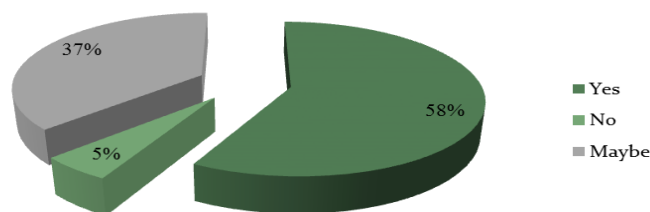
## **What do you like most about the program/worksite?**



## **What are your plans for the fall?**



## **Would you be interested in participating in the SYEP next year?**



# Networking Outreach Event



*“I’m more aware of healthier food options and where to access it.”*

**Makayia 15**



## Community Organizations supported youth at networking outreach event

- 211/Help Me Grow
- Baker Victory Services Way Program
- Belmont Housing Resources WNY
- Boys & Girls Club of the Northtowns
- Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
- Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education
- Catholic Charities of Buffalo
- Confident Girl Mentoring Program
- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Crisis Services
- ECDSS Reading is a Blast Initiative
- Erie 1 BOCES
- Erie County Department of Health
- Erie County Opiate Task Force
- Erie County Personnel Civil Service
- Food for All
- HOPE Buffalo
- Job Corps
- Kids Escaping Drugs
- Millennium Collaborative Care
- NERCC-NY
- Northland Workforce
- NYS Department of Labor
- Peace of the City
- Planned Parenthood
- Professional Culinary Academy
- Project Stork
- SUNY Erie Community College
- Trocaire College
- UB Employment Opportunity Center
- University at Buffalo Dental School



To mark the conclusion of the 2018 Summer Youth Employment Program a networking and outreach event was held August 31, 2018.

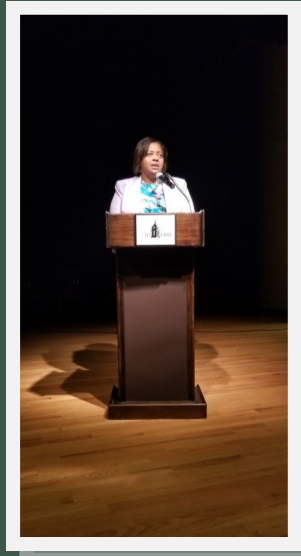
This event was an opportunity to recognize youth participants and worksite providers for the successful completion of the program.

The event provided an opportunity for youth to share their summer work experience and for worksite providers to build connections with our community's youth workforce.

Community organizations were also available for youth to meet with representatives and learn about valuable community resources.

Youth who attended received lunch, backpacks, t-shirts and school supplies for the upcoming school year.





Marie Cannon  
Social Services Commissioner  
Erie County Department of Social Services

### **Encouraging Youth**

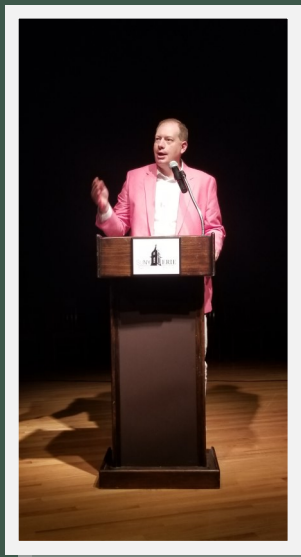
*“Go after your dreams and be successful. Some of you will start your own business; become skilled machinist, and other teachers. The program has been amazing and a great experience, that’s why we do this program. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be part of your life, you are our future.”*



Brenda McDuffie  
President & CEO  
Buffalo Urban League

### **Supporting Youth**

*“Take advantage of what you have gained and learned from the Summer Youth Employment Program. Think about the things that you may want to do in the future so that you can make contributions to your well-being. The program has provided you with organizations that you connect with as well as support you in your endeavors.”*



Jeffrey Conrad  
Director of Workforce Development & Education  
Catholic Charities of Buffalo

### **Inspiring Youth**

*“I’m here to tell you that we need you. Help us move our community and neighborhoods forward. We see growth at Canalside, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, and Northland Workforce Training Center. We need each and every one of you to step up into those industries to keep Buffalo going. We can’t sustain it without your help.”*



Erie County Department of Social Services  
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Buffalo, NY 14202

[www.erie.gov/syep](http://www.erie.gov/syep)

